



Inspiration from the Gospel for the fullness of life in the informal settlements in Mangaung, Free State Province, South Africa

Verster, Pieter
University of the Free State
versterp@ufs.ac.za

Abstract

Informal settlements are mushrooming in Mangaung. The essential questions are what the implications of the Christian Gospel in this situation facing inhabitants of informal settlements in Mangaung are, and how the Gospel can inspire people living in dire circumstances to strive for the fullness of life. The needs of people should be determined first. Listening to people living in informal settlements is essential. Settlements in Mangaung were approached and qualitative research was conducted. The Gospel gives an encompassing and holistic answer to people's needs. All aspects, from the basic need for daily bread to the expectation of a new future, are relevant. Evangelism and humble service should be part of those bringing the Gospel to people living in informal settlements. A relation with Christ is all-important in inspiring a person to experience the fullness of life. The total person should, however, be brought to Christ to experience a full relationship with Him. In order to inspire, the Gospel should be brought by emphasising the glory of Christ so that the person can indeed hear and experience it, and be redeemed of and by Christ.

Keywords

Mangaung; informal settlements; missiology; qualitative empirical research; Hope; New Life in Christ

1. Introduction

Informal settlements are mushrooming in Mangaung (around Bloemfontein). Many people arrive at the informal settlements from not only the farms, the mines and other parts of the rural areas of the Free State, but also from other parts of Southern Africa, Africa and even from countries such as Bangladesh. Fleeing poverty and unemployment,

they again find themselves in a situation of poverty. Many new shacks are built. Sometimes the Motheo District Municipality tries to formalise the informal areas by establishing plots and services (electricity and water supply). This is often not easily achieved, because these informal settlements are mushrooming at such a pace that it is difficult to keep up with the rate at which these new informal settlements are inhabited. People in these informal settlements have to make a living from meagre means. They have to look after themselves, tend to families and their children. Raising children under these difficult circumstances is hard. People are in need of the fullness of life, to be able to experience all aspects of life, even under these circumstances. To establish what should be done, the needs of the people should first be determined. It is necessary to determine all the needs and to try to meet those different needs in the correct way. Research was conducted in the informal areas in Mangaung. During 2013, 23 people were interviewed, using the qualitative method of interviewing.

The data were collected by using the qualitative method of establishing where informal settlements with specific needs are present. Patton (2002:230) explains that the essential difference between quantitative and qualitative research lies in the difference in sampling approaches. Sampling in qualitative research depends on purposeful sampling, using a much smaller number of cases and shows special interest in a specific selected case (Patton 2002:233). The snowball method of qualitative research was used to find people willing to give interviews. Patton (2002:237) writes: “This is an approach for locating information-rich key informants or critical cases.” The interviews were conducted jointly by the author and Rev Tlali Maile. Rev Maile assisted in the research and also translated from Sotho and Xhosa to English. Interviewees granted permission that the interviews be recorded. Anonymity of the interviewees was affirmed. Regarding the evaluation of data Patton (2002:514) explains that the following should be taken into account: be open; generate options; diverge-converge-integrate; use multiple stimuli; side track, zigzag, and circumnavigate; change patterns; making linkages; trust yourself; work at it and play at it. In this article the voices of the respondents will be heard.

This article reports on interviews held in the following areas: Marikana, Bloemside 2, Phase 9, MK Square, Phase 4, and Sonder Water. With regards to Mangaung, Mokoena and Marais (2008:106) state that “... it should be

acknowledged that most of the houses still played a role in promoting further sprawling toward the east, in that large-scale informal settlements developed in that direction. The lack of better-located land is probably the main reason for this circumstance. ” This is also prevalent in other cities that developed at an alarming rate. Food production for the growing population is essential. The needs are more than the supply (Lynch 2005:54). Elliot (2013:251 ff) explains the importance of environmental agendas for sustainable development in the poor cities.

The challenges should be met by both scientific endeavour and theological answers. Walby (2009:454) writes: “Complexity theory is used to solve difficulties in social theory so as to address multiple complex inequalities and globalisation; it provides a toolbox for innovation. Theorizing multiple complex systems of inequalities requires new ways of thinking about social systems in order to be able to conceptualise the relationship between regimes of inequality and institutional domains.” However, attention should also be paid to the Gospel to clearly understand how fullness of life can be attained in informal areas.

The central research questions asked are what are the implications of the Christian Gospel in the situation facing inhabitants of informal settlements and how can the Gospel inspire people living in dire circumstances to strive for a new life.

This research is conducted from a missiological perspective. The discipline of missiology developed much during the last two decades. Although aspects such as conversion, evangelism, and church membership still receive much attention, the emphasis in missiology is presently also on a comprehensive approach where the total person in his or her community is regarded to be included in the kingdom of God with all the benefits of the kingdom. This approach is of importance for the evaluation of the research question. Bosch (1991:409 ff.) indeed already in 1991, with his reference to the new paradigm emerging in ecumenical mission, explained that there is much more to mission and missiology than merely a certain kind of evangelism. He (1991:519) writes: “It is the good news of God’s love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world.” This idea of Bosch is developed further by Bevans and Schroeder (2006:305,348) who state that mission has also much to do with the liberating service of the

reign of God and prophetic dialogue. Skreslet (2012:14) even enhances the idea that missions and missiology as the study of mission should take the deep level of cultural complexity into account in proclaiming the fullness of life in Christ in the Gospel. In this study all the aspects of the people living in poverty and need are taken into account.

To establish how to react to the situation facing inhabitants of the informal settlements, the needs of the people are of the essence. The responses established by the interviews with some inhabitants of the informal areas by the qualitative research have implications for the realisation of the role of the Gospel in such situations.

2. The needs

2.1. Food, clothing and shelter

The most basic human need is a need for food, clothing and shelter. The *Sphere Project* emphasises the importance of basic aspects of human life for the enhancement of human endeavour. It emphasises the right to live a dignified life. Minimum standards in water supply, sanitation and hygiene are essential elements for human dignity (The Sphere Project 2011:88-110). The importance of especially a good supply of water cannot be underestimated as an inadequate supply of water leads to 80% of all sickness and disease in disadvantaged areas (Elliott 2013: 276).

The people usually start by building a small structure as protection against the elements. They often occupy land illegally. In trying to make ends meet, they often do not have enough funds left to attend to even the most basic needs. Huchzermeyer (2011:27) states: “The causes of informal settlements are a complex combination of political, economic and social forces that include but also limit human resolve.”

It is a challenge for all the people from different parts coming together in the area of Mangaung to find work in an area where unemployment is high. Some people try to do what they can, such as women selling sheep heads cooked on a gas burner. Others sell chickens, which they raise in small chicken pens. Only a few are successful. Theft remains a serious problem.

People try to make a living under the scorching sun and sometimes during heavy downpours. Many of the small entrepreneurs experience serious problems. Crime and a lack of funds and infrastructure always have a negative impact on people in these informal settlements. Unemployment remains but one of a number of serious challenges.

It was reported that people living in the **Marikana** subarea face serious challenges because of a lack of electricity and water supply. Most of the people are unemployed, although some sometimes manage to find temporary employment. Very few jobs are permanent, and even those do not yield good salaries that can sustain a family's needs. Crime, such as burglary, robberies, thefts, etc., is a common occurrence. It is reported that most of the youth are not doing anything and are not even attending school or working, and teenage pregnancies often occur. Roads are in a bad condition, especially when it is raining. There is a lack of structure as well, for instance no street names or house numbers.

One interviewee reported:

*We only have one tap in the street.

The interviewees from **Bloemside 2** reported that most people are unemployed, but that some survive because the husband has a job or because they receive grants. They are thus able to sustain living. Crime is high. The infrastructure is dismal because they live in haphazardly built shacks. They lack electricity, fresh water supply and sanitation.

One interviewee said:

*We need jobs. If only someone can assist us.

The interviewees from **Phase 9** reported that people are struggling much because they are unemployed, and that the only jobs they have are part-time jobs and small business. The crime rate is very high and there is a lack of electricity and water supply, but not in all instances. Poverty is extremely high in that area. Children are not attending school.

An interviewee, however, stated that

*Streets are well organised in this area.

The interviewees from **MK Square** reported that there is currently no water and electricity. They do not have good roads and they have no proper sanitation. Crime is very high due to the economic situation.

Others explained that they do not have toilets, churches, water, roads and lights. Children are not attending school.

One interviewee, however, stated that she is very happy to live there although there were some disadvantages in that area.

The interviewees from **Phase 4** reported that there is no water and electricity, or good roads. The place was not given to the people by the government.

The interviewees from **Sonder Water** reported that the government had not officially proclaimed the area. There is no permanent water supply and electricity; therefore there are no lights at night. They have only one tap in the area. Crime is very high in that area. There are also no proper roads.

One interviewee said:

*Youth is in danger, they are using drugs, smoking cigarettes, become prostitute, because of poverty.

Poverty eradication is therefore extremely important but it should always be done in a holistic way. Developing informal areas are important but care must be taken not to use measures for a blanket mandate to get rid of shacks (Huchzermeyer 2006:44). Shelter upgrading is also important in developing informal areas, but it is often very challenging to meet the needs (Skinner et al. 1987:5).

2.2. Spiritual needs

Although there are many churches in the informal areas, many challenges concerning the church remain. They are often independent, small churches without permanent structures and officials. The inhabitants have serious spiritual needs. Personal as well as community sins, such as adultery and theft, exist. Reports on **Marikana** indicated that they do have churches, and that most of the churches are charismatic churches. These churches are not helping because people who attend them are the very people who are suffering. Although they support each other morally, their need for food and clothes, or other material needs, are not supported. Others reported that they do not see any church in that area.

One interviewee said:

*I do have my church; it is about 5km from here to the church.

Another interviewee said:

*I believe if the church can be close things will change spiritually, physically and psychologically.

While another interviewee added:

*I believe in God, I have hope that things will change. I always attend church in Phase 5.

Bloemside 2 interviewees reported that one church exists in that area but that it is not helping the people because the church itself is struggling.

One interviewee suggests

*The church should help us with prayers and the words of God, and try to create jobs for us.

Regarding the church, interviewees from **Phase 9** reported that they do have churches, but they are not helping the people, because they too are struggling and do not have buildings.

One interviewee replied

*Only if churches can get funds to help those who are in need, people need to see them committed in such a manner that can change their mind-set.

And:

*The church can come together and start projects that can help people who are in need, and they should also create jobs for the people.

The interviewees from **MK Square**, reported that churches do not play an important role in the community.

The interviewees from **Phase 4** reported that there are churches present, such as charismatic churches, Pentecostal and Reformed Mainline churches, but none of these churches are helping the poor with food and clothes or even to pray for them.

The interviewees from **Sonder Water** reported that there are no churches in that area.

However, one interviewee replied:

*It's only one church which is a charismatic church that help people with food especially for the young children.

3. The Gospel

The Gospel, however, gives an encompassing and holistic answer to people's needs. All aspects, from the basics such as daily bread to the expectation of a new future, are relevant. Therefore, one should turn to the Gospel to find out how the Gospel of Jesus Christ can help people in dire circumstances. The Lord's Prayer should be studied intensively. Jesus told his disciples to pray for their daily bread. God will provide in the daily bread. Many people living in the informal settlements question why God does not provide enough for them and their children, why they have to live in such difficult circumstances, why they have to experience such troubles, and why God does not look after them and bring about a new situation. The danger in the situation in Africa concerning poverty is, according to Van der Walt (2003:39), fatalistic acceptance. Christians should engage positively in the situation. They must not only pray but also act (Van der Walt 2003:58). Van der Walt (1994:37) calls for a consistent Christian world view – not a dualist or secularist one. Christians should engage fully in this life without losing the perspective of the future life with God. It should be accepted that there must be interventions in the situation of poverty and need. This can only be accomplished if it is accepted that much can be done to get involved and to bring about change.

4. The new future

4.1. Acknowledging Christ

The new future in the Gospel centres on Jesus Christ himself. He brings about the new future. He is the One that gives fullness of life to people so that they can experience the new future. The expectation of the new future is relevant, because Jesus Christ gave his life and opened up the future so that new life can be possible in Jesus Christ and the terrible aspects of sin

and destruction can be conquered. Christ makes it possible to look forward to a new possibility of new life and to new aspects of this new life. In Christ, the door is opened towards a new life and a new situation. Christ makes it possible for us to live in this new life and to live towards the new future. What are the implications of this future? Wright (2008:521) emphasises the new era in Jesus Christ: “Since Jesus, through his cross and resurrection, is to be proclaimed and worshipped as Lord and Christ, that new age has now dawned. The redemption of Israel has begun, though it is not yet complete. The kingdom of God is here, though not yet in its final fullness. The eschatological temple is being rebuilt in the new community of God’s people. And the nations are being gathered in to that new community through the preaching of the gospel and power of the outpoured Spirit of God.”

First, true humanity is found in Christ. Christ brings about the true humanity and the church should always emphasise the true humanity in Christ so that we experience humanity and life in Christ. His message of life is explained fully in what He brings about. The words of love in Christ for human-beings elevate them to a new level where true humanity can be seen in Christ. Volf (2010:174) writes: “The Son of God did not just come to reveal to humans the circle of blissful exchanges within the Holy Trinity as the model for gift-giving between humans; he divested himself of heavenly wealth and became a Holy Child so that the fragile flesh of humanity could be taken up into the embrace of the eternal God.”

Nevertheless, referring to the cross, Christ is also the totally broken One. He yielded himself on the cross. He gave himself up. In reformed theology, Christ is the High Priest who radically identified Him with humans. Welker (2013:280) explains: “It is through unity with Jesus Christ that the Creator becomes discernible as a benevolent God and Father, and through unity with Jesus Christ that the Holy Spirit similarly can be experienced as the Spirit that lovingly saves and elevates human beings and grants them participation in the life of the Resurrected and Exalted.

And

“Through proclamation and the worship event, they encounter Jesus Christ as truly God and truly human, as brother and friend, as someone who was one of them – and still is – as the God and Lord who saves and elevates them.”

The implication is total redemption. Christ is the true mediator. He is the One that brings about a new future. As Kärkkäinen (2013:344) tells us: “A proper account of the meaning of the salvific life, death, resurrection, and atonement of Jesus as the representative of the people of Israel and, in continuation, as the collective new Adam helps connect with history. The whole history of Jesus, including the subsequent pouring out of the Spirit on the new community sent out to the world, belongs to atonement with a promise of a holistic offer of salvation that encompasses all aspects of human, social, and cosmic life.”

Acknowledging Christ means that the beneficial influence of his life, death and resurrection changes the way in which the person in poverty and need is approached. In agreement with Kärkkäinen it should be noticed that Christ changes the total life of the community. He brings about fullness of life in totality. The radical implications of Christ’s presence in the community should be proclaimed.

4.2. New relation with God

Secondly, the fullness of life and a new future are relevant because Christ makes it possible for us to come in a total new relation with God. We come into this relation of God where we experience that God reaches out to us, that He gives us the presence of His salvation that we can experience that Christ is present and that we can magnify God through Christ in His wonders. We can experience the longing for the fullness of the eschatological life in Christ alone.

Concerning Romans, DeSilva (204:610) writes: “God’s righteousness is thus revealed in God’s commitment to act in accordance with God’s own purpose to bring blessings to all nations through transforming the sinner, by passing over former transgressions and justifying the ungodly (Rom 3:25-26).”

Christ enables us to look forward to a new life. Hebrews especially shows us the longing of those who believed, for the New Jerusalem. They look forward and see it in the future. Lane (2002: 394-395) states that faith is then also linked to the future: “Faith is shown to be a temporal orientation to the future. The eschatological, forward-looking character of faith invests the realm of objective hopes and promises with solidity. It is the property

of faith to render hope secure. From this perspective, it is proper to speak of a demonstrating function of faith. Faith demonstrates the existence of substantial reality, which cannot be perceived through empirical sense perception. It furnishes evidence concerning events as yet undisclosed because they belong to the eschatological future.”

The longing for it, although they are struggling in this life and have many problems and many struggles, is fulfilled in the New Jerusalem. Therefore, in these informal settlements, the longing for the new life should also inspire people to change what they can and to strive towards this new life. It must, however, be emphasised that it is very difficult for people in informal settlements to do that by themselves. They need help from outside and therefore the church has a very important role to play. The church should inspire people to look forward and to see how they can bring about a new situation. Being present in the world, the church can change the life in which people are living. This is a calling to all churches to get involved with the needs of people in the most profound way.

Kirk (1999:54) writes: “The church is to be involved in every action that restores, even partially, wholeness to human life.” He emphasises dignity of the person as essential. In the informal settlements it is radically necessary to restore wholeness of human dignity and the church is called to empower the needy in this regard.

5. Practical suggestions

5.1. The presence of the church

How can new life be achieved? Practical suggestions should be made. First, the church should be a haven in the community for community life. People from different parts of life sometimes group together in informal settlements. They do not know each other; they do not know the situation in the city. The church can help them to understand the way in which the city operates and the way in which they can look for jobs. Furthermore, the church can offer assistance by looking after them from their arrival so that they will have enough to eat and be looked after until they have a sufficiently equipped structure.

It should be noted that many churches are present in or near the informal settlements. The different churches should seek to empower the people in an ecumenical way, and not working against each other. The church in all its presentations should be available to be of assistance to the people. However, the danger of certain preachers who misuse their powers to take from the poor should be noted. Churches should jointly warn against such misuse of power. In the informal settlements it is not an option for churches to undermine each other. Christ should be One and in all. Emphasis should totally be on proclaiming Christ as the One who establishes fullness of life.

5.2. Advocacy

Furthermore, the church can be a link to the government. The church can help people to understand how the community can support development. The church can bring about a situation where those in power can understand their task to help. Concerning advocacy, Sloane (2012:186) explains that it is biblical to engage in tactics to speak out towards those in power. They can be persuaded by strong ethical engagements projecting a moral vision, by warnings about consequences (even electoral) of their deeds, and warnings about the dangers of power and the judgement of God. Justifying advocacy includes reference to the character of God, the shape of the story of God, the nature of creation in the image of God, and growing into the image of the Son and the shape of the community transformed by God and the future towards which we are led by God (Sloane 2012:186). Bevans and Schroeder (2004:320-321) also explain how systematic oppression and marginalisation must also be met by the triumph of God's Spirit and the advocacy of righteousness. Although they regard liberation theology as acceptable in the involvement against structural sin, the fullness of life must be sought in the Christ of love.

Concerning the informal settlements the most important questions involve how government can provide employment and how the church can inspire good governance. The challenge for the church remains to be prophetic without becoming a political entity. The prophetic voice of the church should be heard as the church calls for deep involvement in the plight of people living in the informal settlements. The church is not a revolutionary political entity. However, the church should empower the persons living in the informal settlements to be able to exercise their political rights.

The following should be emphasised:

- These persons have the same political rights as all other citizens
- They have the right to call the political functionaries to attend to their needs
- They have the right to vote in for the political party of their choice
- They have the right to peaceful protests if and when their rights are infringed upon
- They have the right to clean water and shelter

The church must always be prepared to fight for the rights of the persons in informal settlements without becoming a revolutionary entity.

5.3. Evangelism

Next, evangelism and humble service should be part of spreading the Gospel in the informal settlements. One interviewee stated that evangelism is not only about bringing people the message of new life in Christ, but also to be able to live this new life in all aspects of their lives, body and soul. Kolb (2012:11) states: “Throughout the fourth gospel, the Evangelist intertwines Christology, missiology, and ecclesiology; a vital part of his understanding of the person of Christ is His sense of His sendness and His sending of the people whom He calls and gathers as a loving community and propels them on His mission to the world. Christology is our understanding of the person of Christ.”

The church should empower people to know Christ so that they can be empowered to live in a new situation and in this environment.

Wilson (1983:19) writes: “The fruit of evangelism is those who through conversion and baptism accept the Lordship of Jesus and join their lives in the work and life of the body of Christ. Common witness and common commitment to social transformation are the natural expressions of baptism. The heart of evangelism is to foster local communities of faith in every human community. The task of sowing the seeds should always be prominent in our mission strategies, until in every human community there is a people confessing Jesus Christ, and in His name serving people. Just how this is to be done fruitfully and sensitively is the question.”

Evangelism, therefore, should be a holistic presentation of the whole Gospel to people through the Gospel of glory and of salvation; a Gospel wherein they can see the future of life with God, where they can experience conversion and a radical turn to God. Kim (2008:25) writes: “The meaning of evangelism is the proclamation of good news to the world. How can we continue to exclude and avoid those with whom we are not comfortable and live into our evangelical calling at the same time? If we do not shed this primitive tendency, and yet heed the call to be evangelical, do we not risk exporting our ecclesial tribalism far and wide? How can we say we are evangelical if the good news is not good for the whole world? If the gospel is proclaimed under the rubric of the homogeneous unit principle, I would argue that this is distorted news, even false news. The acid test of evangelism must be: Is this good news for the poor?”

In this regard reference to Bosch (1991:409-420) is appropriate. Bosch explains that evangelism has many aspects to it such as proclamation of Christ’s Lordship, leading people to Christ and bringing people into the church. However, Bosch (1991:409-420) also emphasised that evangelism is much more – it also includes the well-being of the whole person.

Bevans and Schroeder (2006:347) explain that evangelism is essential and that evangelical and Pentecostal missionaries especially emphasised it and had great success in cross-cultural mission. The particularity of Christ and the Christian faith is emphasised, but they are wearisome of the neglect of the Trinitarian aspects of mission.

Dibeela also emphasises (2008:188): “Evangelism is not just a theoretical discourse but a process that is about changing and transforming lives, social policies and politico-economic structures and systems.”

Only in experiencing the presence of Christ can people experience a new life in Christ. Fullness of life means that one has a relation with Jesus Christ, but also lives in a new relation with the environment in which you are placed. Therefore, the person in totality should be brought to Christ to experience the renewal of all the relations of the person. The people in the informal settlements are in dire need of self-respect. In the presence of God, they can experience new life.

Therefore, inspiration should always be to help the person to understand the fullness of life. To inspire the Gospel should be brought with full emphasis on the glory of Christ so that the person can indeed hear, experience and be redeemed of and by Christ.

Ewell and Baxter-Brown (2011:102) show how encompassing evangelism is: “For Paul, fidelity to the gospel cannot be reduced merely to preaching, for the gospel is much more than a set of truths phrased as Enlightenment propositions. Rather, the gospel is a way of being and becoming, a contextualisation of the life of Jesus in a local community, a story that requisitions all other claims to authority and loyalty, a narrative that changes the course of all human history, directing the past to the future via the Cross.”

5.4. Hope

Finally, there is a new implication for hope when a person is brought into a new relation with Christ. Hopelessness is present in the informal settlements and it is clear from the research done in the informal settlements in Mangaung that many people have lost hope. New hope should be experienced in this situation, but it can only be experienced if people find new hope. Hope can only be experienced and hope can only be possible in a relation with Jesus Christ.

Concerning hope for the future, the interviewees gave different answers. Some had lost all hope and they were very negative but others, for instance the majority of interviewees at **MK square**, were positive.

The **Marikana** interviewees reported that prayer could change their lives. In addition, one has hope because of believing in God. However, it was stated that there is no hope because of the lack of help from government.

One interviewee in **Bloemside 2** said:

*The future is absolutely doomed to us here, no one comes to us and addresses our issues, it is very terrible, and we really need help. I don't have hope in our government now.

Another interviewee in **Phase 9** stated

*I believe that things will change one day.

Some interviewees in **MK Square**, do not see any future because the youth are into drugs and most of them are sexually active and females fall pregnant. Others do not see any future in the country.

Many interviewees are, however, very positive about the future in this area, but only if government can build schools, churches and other important facilities, which can assist in changing people's lives. Another interviewee said that she is very positive, even about the government, and she said everything was going well. Yet another interviewee is very positive about the future and believes that the government is still governing well. One interviewee said that he believes that there is a future for the country.

One interviewee in **Phase 4** stated:

*About the future of our country, it is hard to say and predict it, because our government like to make promises but not stick on those promises.

People in **Sonder Water** had different views about the future. Some said that there is a future in the country while others see no future.

6. New life in christ

What aspects of hope should be attested to? First, hope in a new life in Christ. Against sin and destruction, new life in Christ brings about hope for a future where one can live with Christ. This future has implications for this life and for life everlasting. In this life one can experience the presence of Christ, the love of Christ and the nearness of Christ. Hope also has expectations for tomorrow, for the life after death, that the fullness of life will be full of glory even when one dies, even when one loses everything. Hope in Christ means that the new relation with Christ fills their lives with possibilities and the glory of the future life. The fullness of life is possible in Him. The church should be humble in serving in the informal settlements. Bringing about new life and new hope is very important in the informal settlements; it should include glorifying Christ and emphasising His redemption.

In this regard Tutu (2004:8-9) writes: "Many of us can acknowledge that God cares about the world but can't imagine that God would care about you and me individually. But our God marvellously, miraculously cares

about each and every one of us. The Bible has this incredible image of you, of me, of all of us, each one, held as something precious, fragile in the palms of God's hands. And that you and I exist only because God is forever blowing God's breath into our being. And so God says to you: 'I love you. You are precious in your fragility and your vulnerability. Your being is a gift. I breathe into you and hold you as something precious.'

The church should be present in the community by looking after the ill and those without bread. Small churches are present in the community, but they should not be there to make money for themselves; they should be present to reach out to the people, to be there among the people, to help the people, so that they can bring about a new situation for the people in their current situation. They should be present in the community so that they can bring about a new hope for the people. The church should be present in all aspects to bring about this new glorification of Christ the Lord. It is very important that Christ should be emphasised as the One through which the church serves in the community.

Migliore (2004:189) writes: "It is a world saturated with violence, a world of both hidden and overt savagery – the poor exploited, women beaten and raped, the innocent slaughtered, children abused, the earth plundered, prophets murdered. The message and ministry of Jesus clash profoundly with his world. He announces God's forgiveness of sinners, promises the future to the poor, welcomes outcasts and strangers, calls all to repentance and a new way of life characterised by love of God and others." Jesus accomplishes this through suffering.

And

"It was divine 'necessity' – the necessity of God's gracious and non-coercive love – that the love of God be fully expressed in all its vulnerability in Jesus Christ."

7. Church as community of hope

The church should be the community that comes together to glorify Christ. Even in the situations in the informal settlements the church should come together to glorify Christ, to emphasise the glory of Christ and to proclaim that Christ is the Lord. They should glorify His name and His radical

redemption. A church should be a community that does just that in the informal settlements; the church should be the link from those people to the glorification in Christ. The church should emphasise that Christ is the One that saves them. Therefore, the church should always be present in the community in days of struggle and days of problems. In days of radical challenges the church should be present, the church should look after people and help the people so that they can experience the fullness of life in all situations. Therefore, in following Jesus Christ, the church in the community should be a presence of love and kindness. It should be a church of radical change, of empowering, of calling to service. The church should also be a church of peace, because the peace of Christ is beyond understanding and remains important in situations where people do not have the very basics necessary to look after themselves.

8. Conclusion

The Gospel inspires the fullness of life. The Gospel inspires in the informal settlements in Mangaung. The Gospel inspires people to live with God and in South Africa, the truth of the Gospel will be tested in the informal settlements. The truth of the Gospel will be seen there or it will not be seen.

Bibliography

- Bevans, SB & Schroeder, RP 2006. *Constants in context: a theology of mission for today*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
- Bosch, DJ 1991. *Transforming mission: paradigm shifts in theology of mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
- Dibeela, M.P 2008. "Conversion, evangelism and the market." *International Review of Mission* 97(386-387):187-197. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* [Accessed: February 25, 2014]
- DeSilva, DA 2004. *An introduction to the New Testament: context, method & ministry formation*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
- Elliot, JA 2013. *An introduction to sustainable development*. London: Routledge.

- Ewell, C & Baxter-Brown, J 2011. “Changing the world, one story at a time: rediscovering evangelism after Cape Town 2010”, *Evangelical Review of Theology* 35(2):100-110, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost, [Accessed: 25 February 2014]
- Huchzermeyer, M 2006. The new instrument for upgrading informal settlements in South Africa: contributions and constraints, in Huchzermeyer, M & Karam, A 2006. *Informal settlements: a perpetual challenge?* Cape Town: UCT Press. 41-61.
- Huchzermeyer, M 2011. *Cities with “slums”: from informal settlement eradication to a right to the city in Africa*. Claremont: UCT Press.
- Kärkkäinen, V-M 2013. *Christ and reconciliation. A constructive Christian theology for the pluralistic world. Vol 1*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Kim, Jin S 2008. “Beyond the comfort zone: evangelism as parabolic witness.” *Congregations* 34(2):22-26. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost [Accessed: February 25, 2014]
- Kirk, J.A 1999. *What is mission? Theological explorations*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
- Kolb, R 2012, “Those who are sent: Christ and His church: Christology, missiology, and ecclesiology in the Gospel of John”, *Missio Apostolica*, 20(1):11-15, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost, [Accessed: 26 February 2014]
- Lane, WL 2002. *Hebrews 9-13. Word Biblical Commentary: Vol. 47B*. Waco, TX: Word, Incorporated 392-395
- Lynch, K 2005. *Rural-urban interaction in the developing world*. London: Routledge.
- Migliore, DL 2004. *Faith seeking understanding: an introduction to Christian theology*. (2nd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Mokoena, M & Marais, L 2008. An evaluation of post-apartheid housing delivery in Mangaung: a view from local government, in Marais, L & Visser, G (eds) *Spatialities of urban change: Selected themes from Bloemfontein at the beginning of the 21st century*. Stellenbosch: Sun Press. 97-114.

- Patton, MQ 2002. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. (3rd ed.). London: Sage.
- Skinner, RJ, Taylor, JL & Wegelin, EA 1987. *Shelter upgrading for the urban poor: Evaluation of Third World experience*. Manila: Island Publishing House.
- Skreslet, SH 2012. *Comprehending mission: the questions, methods, themes, problems, and prospects of missiology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
- Sloane, A. 2012. Justifying advocacy: a biblical and theological rationale for speaking the truth to power on behalf of the vulnerable. *Evangelical Review of Theology*. 36(2):176-186. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost*, [Accessed: 13 January 2016]
- The Sphere Project. 2011. *Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response*. Rugby: Practical Action Publishing.
- Tutu, D 2004. *God has a dream: a vision of hope for our time*. London: Rider.
- Van der Walt, BJ 1994. *The liberating message: a Christian worldview for Africa*. Potchefstroom: IRS.
- Van der Walt, BJ 2003. *Understanding and rebuilding Africa: from desperation today to expectation for tomorrow*. Potchefstroom: ICCA.
- Volf, M 2010. *Against the tide: love in a time of petty dreams and persisting enmities*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Walby, S 2009. *Globalization & inequalities: complexity and contested modernities*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Welker, M 2013. *God the Revealed: Christology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Wilson, LW 1983. Evangelism, church and social transformation. *Touchstone* 1(3):14-20. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials*.
- Wright, CJH 2008. *The mission of God: unlocking the Bible's grand narrative*. Nottingham: IVP.

